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MEMOIR

OF

REV. BENJAMIN MITCHELL, D. D.

WITH BRIEF MENTION

OF HIS PREDECESSOR,

REV. JOSEPH ANDERSON,

AND HIS SUCCESSOR,

REV. SAMUEL W. PRINGLE,

ALSO,

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE MT. PLEASANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

——"*like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season.*"

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PREFACE.

To the Scattered Members of the
Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Congregation,

GREETING:

In the Summer of 1885, a committee was appointed by the Session of the Church to look up and plan out some scheme that would materialize into a memorial of Dr. Mitchell. That committee decided that a Biographical Sketch of Dr. Mitchell would be welcomed in hundreds of homes, far and near; and that a notice of his predecessor, Rev. Joseph Anderson, and his successor, Rev. S. W. Pringle, would add to the interest of his partly told life.

This sketch will contain some account of the times in which he lived, what he had to endure in pioneer work, some results of his labors, his semi-centennial, extracts from speeches and addresses made and by whom, the last days of the old veteran of the Cross, the funeral services, pall-bearers, floral decorations, with gleanings from the press as to his life and untold influence. We hope that much may interest you, and that there may be a pleasant recalling of sunny days; that many thoughts of Dr. Mitchell's life may draw you closer to the Saviour he preached; that as you may feel inclined you may give some material aid to a memorial.

Our close relation to Dr. Mitchell and his family, makes it a privilege to bear testimony to his beautiful character, to his faithful, though quiet work. We bless God for such a life. He fought a good fight. Let us rejoice that he has won the crown. The memory of this faithful workman will still enable others to render a better service. We feel that other hands could have better done this, in outline and rhetoric, but we yield to none in love for the work, or in grateful memories of the departed.

We do not send out this sketch because it contains anything that is worthy of the beloved and honored name with which we thus seek to associate it; nor yet because we would avail ourselves of a vulgar pretext to display in public an affection that is best honored by the silence which it renders sacred.

T. M. MCCONAHEY,
L. C. REID, } *Committee.*

MT. PLEASANT, OHIO,
Dec. 1st, 1887.

REV. JOSEPH ANDERSON.

"Part not with these old names. See
How they shine in these old heavens like stars
whose rays no age can dim."

Of the life and labor of Rev. Joseph Anderson we know but little. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ohio, October 17th, 1798. His ordination took place, it is said, under a large tree on the farm of the late Clark Mitchell, at Scotch Ridge. The honor is his of being the first Presbyterian minister ordained west of the Ohio. He served Mt. Pleasant (then Short Creek) as Stated Supply for two years. A joint call was placed before Presbytery, April 15th, 1800, from the churches of Mt. Pleasant and St. Clairsville (then Richland)—one-third of his time at Mt. Pleasant and two-thirds at St. Clairsville. He was installed August 20th, of the same year. After serving Mt. Pleasant as Pastor for twenty-nine years, he was called for the whole of his time to St. Clairsville. He lived on the farm on which T. M. McConahey now resides. The house, a hewed log one, still stands. The room devoted to study and meditation is now used for a general store-room.

"Mr. Anderson was a man of zeal and true piety, sound in the faith and abundant in labors, of good presence and address, but of

moderate abilities. He was dismissed to the Presbytery of St. Charles, in Missouri, in 1835. His death occurred at Monticello, Mo., in 1847, in the eightieth year of his age." Servant of God, well done!

"I need not be missed if another succeed me,
To reap down those fields which in spring I have sown;
He who ploughed and who sowed is not missed by the reaper,
He is only remembered by what he has done."

REV. BENJAMIN MITCHELL, D. D.

Rev. Benjamin Mitchell, D.D., was born November 25th, 1800, in York County, Pennsylvania. (The exact date of his birth is not known, as the record was destroyed by fire, so his sister and brothers agreed to call the 25th his natal day). His father, Major Joseph Mitchell, was married to Mary Mitchell (no relation), and though of Scotch-Irish descent—to the best of our information—both were born in this country. The family consisted of a daughter, Elizabeth, and four sons, George, David, Joseph, and Benjamin. The father was a farmer by occupation. He was pressed into his country's service, with his team, and remained till the close of the Revolutionary War. He was a Covenanter in faith and very strict in the training of his children. It is said, he would not permit them to say "indeed."

Dr. Mitchell's mother died when he was three years of age. Shortly after his eleventh year his father died. We have often heard him say, "I never knew a mother's love." The care of the family then fell upon the sister. The after-lives of these useful men are her best monument.

Of the boyhood of Dr. Mitchell we know but little, save that that mirth-loving characteristic that cropped out through all his ministerial life, held almost unbounded sway. His laugh was as contagious as his sympathy was spontaneous and tender. Thrown on his own resources, he worked for $2.50 per month, and by economy, was enabled to save something to secure schooling. When sixteen years of age he began teaching school—a subscription school. He found a warm friend in General Colvin, whom he always remembered with

profound gratitude, and through whose influence, his school brought him an income of $25.00 or $30.00 per month. While thus engaged, he boarded part of the time with Mr. John Theaker,—father of Mr. G. M. Theaker, who served the Mt. Pleasant Church so acceptably for thirty-six years as Ruling Elder.

When he decided to enter the ministry is not known. When nineteen years of age he united with the church of Slate Ridge. He pursued his Academic course under Professor Dinsmore and his Theological under Rev. Samuel Martin, D. D. He was united in marriage to Miss Ann Alexander Dinsmore, April 26th, 1826, by Dr. Samuel Martin, of Peach Bottom, York County, Pa. He was licensed by the Presbytery of New Castle, in 1827, and came West—to Ohio—in 1829, with his wife and two children. Here began that work of faith and labor of love, that only ended fifty-five years after, on the 26th of December, 1884.

When Mr. Mitchell came to Ohio, the state was but twenty-seven years old, consequently he had to endure such privations and hardships as are incident to the life of those men and women who builded broad and well—not only for monetary wealth—but for the religious and intellectual life as well. He preached his first sermon in Mt. Pleasant, on the second Sabbath of June, 1829, in the Seceder Church, since torn down and removed. Rev. Mr. Clokey was Pastor of that church at that time. The text that morning was, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Matthew 20: 6. (The last time he preached, as our Pastor, he used this same text). Joseph Kithkart led the singing. That morning was the first time "Watts' Hymns" were used in the congregation. To Mr. Mitchell's inquiry, after the sermon, "Who is that fine-looking old gentleman in the corner?" answer was made, "Why that's your uncle, James Mitchell." The congregation was so well pleased with his effort, that the following paper and subscription-list was made out:

"The Rev. Joseph Anderson having expressed his willingness to give up the charge of Short Creek congregation, and said congrega-

tion being satisfied that the ministerial qualification of the Rev. Benjamin Mitchell is such as we hope would render his ministrations in the gospel profitable to our spiritual interests, therefore, we, the under-named signers, do promise that if the Rev. B. Mitchell should undertake the charge of said congregation, to discharge all ministerial duties therein the one-half of his time; that we will pay said Mitchell the several sums annexed to our names—the one-half in such produce as may suit said Mitchell, at market price, the other half in cash; and our subscriptions to be paid in half-yearly payments; we, the undersigners bind ourselves, heirs, executors and administrators to the fulfillment of the above; while the Rev. Benjamin Mitchell is our minister and we his hearers."

August 4th, 1829.

[NAMES.]

The largest individual subscription was $10.00; on the back of this sheet is a note—"the whole subscription to this paper is $187.00. Further noted—"there is $27.00 of the above subscription not to be depended upon as standing, as most of those whose subscriptions make up this $27.00, were renters or young men whose residence was not permanent."

For a time he served Mt. Pleasant and Bloomfield. His connection with Bloomfield ended in 1835, by a call from Rock Hill. For twenty-three years this pleasant relation existed. Then, as both churches wished to secure his services for the whole time, the Presbytery was appealed to, and decided in favor of Mt. Pleasant. The congregation of Rock Hill passed the most loving resolutions of farewell, and the Mt. Pleasant charge was continued till June 6th, 1876.

We must remember, that the field over which he reigned as Bishop for a quarter of a century embraced a portion of eastern Ohio, more than twenty miles long, and six or eight miles wide. All over this vast field, from house to house, he visited, advised, instructed, comforted and rejoiced with his people in all the varied experiences of

life. "At every pastoral visit he made, he wove a new strand into that cord of love that bound that household to him and to the sanctuary. Such a pastor always bases the pulpit on the hearts of his people." Welcomed alike was he in cabin, or more pretentious home. His cheerful spirit which was better than medicine, and his tact and unfailing sympathy, made him everywhere a welcomed guest. Was there rejoicing!—Mr. Mitchell must share it. Was there sorrow!—who so ready to sympathize as Mr. Mitchell. But his thoughts and benefactions were not bounded by his parish. "I am a man and am therefore interested in all that belongs to my race," fell oft from his lips. His large heart went out to a world lost in sin.

When Mr. Mitchell took charge of the Mt. Pleasant Church there were 54 names on the roll of membership. There were added to the church during his ministry 537. As church and congregation grew his salary was raised to $600.00, and he often relinquished part of that amount when he heard that some of his parishioners were too poor to pay their subscriptions.

Whole number of baptisms 576,—436 of these being infants; total amount of contributions $27,155.00, over $6,400.00 being for benevolence; I do not know whether the cost of building the churches is included in this or not. The report for 1835 is missing. The first contribution for Foreign Missions, in 1840, amounted to $23.00. The Board of Foreign Missions had its origin in the Synod of Pittsburgh, most likely in the fall of 1838. Mr. Mitchell was present and voted for it. Mr. Mitchell was a commissioner to the General Assembly which met in Philadelphia in 1837, voted for the measure that led to the division in the Old and New School, and was present, though not a delegate, at the Assembly which met in Pittsburgh in 1869. Mr. Mitchell was a member of the Steubenville Presbytery until 1839, when the Presbytery of St. Clairsville was formed, and Mr. Mitchell elected Clerk, in which capacity he served for many years. The title, "D. D.," first appeared in connection with his name in 1859; he received this title from two colleges, Franklin, and the Washington and

Jefferson. Number of sermons preached, 3,000; number of marriages solemnized, 444 (first one in 1831). Fees ranging from the promise, "I'll do as much for you sometime," and of a leg of mutton, up to $20.00. Many of these unions have been sun-glistened, and warm hearts and loving hands have gone forth to bless the world by their united lives, wedded for Heaven. Others have been tempest-tossed and thunder-riven. Their own lives dwarfed and blighted, and down the stream of time they have sent their baleful influence.

A MARRIAGE OF THE OLDEN TIME.

One cold, winter day Mr. Mitchell was called on to marry a couple. Arriving at the house he found a very poor fire, and as no men were about, he went out, found the wood pile and the ax, and soon had a tolerably comfortable fire. The bride introduced herself and companion, but no groom. On inquiry it was found that H—— was "at a neighbor's, threshing." Meanwhile active preparations for the feast went on. The lady of the house came home with a small sack, the dutch oven boiled vigorously over the fire, when the lady came forward and taking a handful of salt from the mysterious little sack, raised the oven lid, and lo, a goose! The old saying, that if you would sprinkle salt on a bird's tail you could catch it, came to mind. Well, the parson felt sure of that goose. Time passed, and the logs gave way, upsetting oven and goose on the hearth, it was gathered up as best it could be, and again placed over the fire. The parson soon saw signs of a second fall, and suggested that the oven be placed on the hearth, which was done. No groom yet. The day was passing away, and the parson, wishing to get home before night, asked if there was not going to be a wedding there. "You are right, there is," the bride made answer. Finally H—— came, changed his attire, and was ready for the service. The parson told them to stand near the fire, to be comfortable, and he would stand back in the room.

The words were spoken
That could ne'er be broken.

After the prayer was finished, the parson was surprised when he opened his eyes, to see H—— at the back part of the room, kneeling at the foot of the ladder which led to the loft; but he soon ended his devotions, and was ready for congratulations. The minister's work was done, so he told them he would have to go home. Oh no! he must stay for supper. The night was very cold, and his family alone; his apologies were accepted. H—— offered the parson 37½ cents for the job, but was told to keep it and buy his wife a dress. *This is the only case on record that the Doctor ever refused to stay for dinner when goose or turkey was on the bill of fare.*

Shakespeare says: "Comparisons are odorous," they may be profitable. St. Clairsville was organized the same year as Mt. Pleasant. Up to 1869 she had given over $7,500.00 to benevolence alone. Mt. Pleasant, up to 1879, over $6,400.00. St. Clairsville has had six supplies and her sixth pastor, Mt. Pleasant her third pastor. Each have had four houses of worship, six persons have entered the ministry from St. Clairsville, and four from Mt. Pleasant. Wonder if the parents of Mt. Pleasant have neglected the training and consecration of their sons?

His teaching and example on systematic giving was so oft repeated that he said, that people would call that his "hobby." Long before the subject was discussed in General Assembly, or various societies had sent out their publications on that subject, Mr. Mitchell was a firm believer that one-tenth belonged to the Lord. Yet we have understood that he never took that high ground in Christian theory and practice till that large-souled woman—the second Mrs. Mitchell—brought it to his thoughts.

After repeated requests from Dr. Mitchell, the active pastoral relation was dissolved at a meeting of Presbytery held at Mt. Pleasant, June 6th, 1876. Dr. Wm. Grimes made an appropriate discourse. Revs. R. Alexander, of St. Clairsville, and A. J. Alexander, of Scotch Ridge, brought into the ministry of the reconciliation under Mr. Mitchell's preaching, were present, with Revs. Crawford, Armstrong, Milford, Chalfant, Gaston, Parks, Hattery, and Day. At this time

Mr. J. G. Theaker, on behalf of the congregation, read their reluctant consent. The resolutions were not those, so common in later years, when long pastorates are the exception—not the rule—but, as sundering of ties that had been measured by the lives of many of its members. The church was wreathed with flowers and evergreens. The day was one of quiet and sacred interest. Mr. Mitchell was retained as "pastor emeritus," and was seldom absent from his place in church while health and strength continued.

In domestic life Dr. Mitchell was a model man. He was tender and affectionate as a husband and a father. His intercourse with his own household always bespoke the gentleman of culture and refinement. To the stranger he was ever kind and cordial, and a welcome to his hospitality was never wanting. His hand was open to the needy of every class. His benevolence to the poor was no less than his response to the calls of the church—his purse was open to both. He was not a stranger to sorrow and domestic bereavement. In June, 1842, the wife of his youth died, leaving him with a family of six children; she was a most devoted and faithful wife and mother, and her loss was keenly felt. Then his three sons, Addison, Andrew and Martin, were all laid in their graves in early manhood. In 1849 he was married to Elizabeth Huston, of Washington, Pa. She was a woman of rare excellence of character. This union was unbroken for more than a quarter of a century, when she was called up higher.

Three of his children survived him. The eldest, Mrs. Kate Thoburn, widow of the late Col. Thoburn, died August 2d, 1886. There still remain, Mrs. Mary R. Dickey, wife of Rev. D. L. Dickey, of Beaver, Penna., and Mrs. Eliza J. C. Updegraff, wife of Rev. D. B. Updegraff, of Mt. Pleasant. Their veneration and affection for such a parent was more than ordinary; their sorrow at his loss is great indeed, but not unmixed with thankfulness, that their honored father has finished his course, and gone to his sure reward. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

Mr. Mitchell enjoyed mingling with his flock in a social way. The many May-day gatherings held on his pleasant and ample grounds near Mt. Pleasant, were scenes of yearly enjoyment, where after hours of social life we were sent to our homes with his benediction resting upon us.

SEMI-CENTENNIAL.

CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SETTLEMENT OF REV. BENJAMIN MITCHELL, D. D., AS PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION OF MT. PLEASANT.

Wednesday, June 4th, 1879, was a gala day in the quiet old town of Mt. Pleasant. At an early hour, the unusual hum and activity of her citizens gave evidence of the near approach of stirring events—the town was alive with people. All seemed to turn instinctively to the east end of town, where the Presbyterian Church is located; its doors were thrown open, and busy hands actively engaged in putting the finishing touches to the festoons of evergreens and flowers, with which the pulpit and walls were graced. Other and stronger hands were engaged outside, in preparing temporary tables on which to place the abundant supplies of substantial delicacies and luxuries which were constantly arriving to feed the expected crowd. To give some idea of the magnitude of the preparations in this line, it is only necessary to state, that over four hundred persons were abundantly supplied—and the baskets which were filled at the close were unnumbered.

Shortly before noon, the church choir, re-enforced by detachments from several of the colonies which this Mother Church has thrown out, introduced the exercises of the day by singing the 22d hymn: "All Hail the power of Jesus' Name." Rev. R. Alexander, read the 103d and 133d Psalms, and was followed in prayer by Rev. Crawford, of Slate Ridge, York County, Pa., (the birthplace of Dr. Mitchell).

After a few brief announcements, of the order of exercises for the afternoon, the audience which was largely augmented by former mem-

bers of the congregation from the neighboring churches of Short Creek, Farmington, Scotch Ridge, Smithfield, and Martin's Ferry; visitors from Rock Hill, St. Clairsville, and others, together with the Rev. Crawford, of Eastern Pennsylvania; Rev. Dickey, of Beaver County, Pennsylvania; Rev. R. Alexander, of St. Clairsville; Rev. Chalfant, of Martin's Ferry; Rev. Parks, of Adena; Rev. Moffat, of Wheeling, W. Va.; Rev. Grove, of Smithfield; Rev. Alexander, of Scotch Ridge; and Rev. Pringle, of Mt. Pleasant; adjourned to the bountiful repast provided, and to which full justice was done.

At one o'clock, that portion of the assemblage which could obtain entrance again, collected inside the church, when a call was made for all who were members of the church when Dr. Mitchell became the pastor to rise; seven gray-headed men and women rose; again a call was made, for those who heard his first sermon to this congregation, to rise; an addition of ten was made to the original seven. Rev. James Moffat was then introduced, and delivered the following address:

In asking me to make the opening address upon this occasion, the committee has placed me in a very embarrassing position. I cannot but feel that an older man, associated in the ministry for a longer time with your venerable pastor, should be the first to speak. But I have no doubt the committee was governed in its choice by the fact that Dr. Mitchell and my father were for so many years most intimate friends. I am asked to take the place that would have been accorded to him if he were still here. But this fact only adds to my embarrassment, for, how can I refer to the scenes that occurred during the years of that intimacy, without emotions which may unfit me for speaking as the occasion demands. Their love was like the love of Jonathan and David, their souls were knit together in life, but now they are separated, and I cannot look upon the survivor without a thought of the departed one. But these mournful reflections do not befit the day of joy that has called us together. "This day is holy unto the Lord your God, go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, neither be ye sorry, for

the joy of the Lord is your strength." Let it be a day of mutual congratulation and heartfelt thanksgiving to God. Tearful reminiscences may be unavoidable. From the fifty years of the past there may come to us the mingled shouts of joy and grief, but surely the shout of gladness prevails.

I congratulate the honored pastor of this church upon the completion of his fifty years of labor in this place, because God has found use for him for so extraordinary a period of time. The highest honor the Great Master can bestow upon us while on earth is to employ us constantly in His service. If we have need of a Saviour in heaven it is a comfort and a joy to know that the Saviour has need of us on earth. It is to us an evidence of the high esteem in which the venerable pastor of this church is held by his Lord, that He has kept him employed in His vineyard until almost worn out by the honorable toil.

I congratulate you, as members of this church, and especially, the few of your number who welcomed his coming fifty years ago, not because you have clung to him and preferred him to all others—for how could you withhold love and honor from such a man—I might as well think of congratulating a husband for clinging to his wife and loving her more tenderly with the advancing years—but I congratulate you because God has not deemed it necessary for your good to inflict on you those frequent changes of pastors which so often cause divisions of sentiment, a partisanship, which makes invidious comparisons between the present and former pastors, and a restless state that renders impossible that warm attachment that should exist between the shepherd and his flock, and without which preaching will be comparatively barren of results.

There is no minister living whom I have known longer than Dr. Mitchell, and none whom I have loved more tenderly. My earliest recollections of happy scenes in my father's house are associated with his frequent visits. I cannot remember the time when we were too young to appreciate his company. The gladdest tidings to us was the announcement, "Dr. Mitchell is coming." When he was in the house

we could not be banished to the second table, and no greater calamity could have befallen us than to be sent off to bed at the children's hour.

Of course we enjoyed the amusing anecdotes and the witty remarks with which the conversation always abounded. The humor was always such as children might safely hear, so pure was it, and if we could not always see the point of the story, yet we could not refrain from joining with him in his hearty and contagious laugh. But the end of their conversation was not mere amusement, the story was often pathetic and taught some lesson of piety. The spiritual troubles and triumphs each had discovered in his pastoral work were often made the theme of friendly and earnest discussion, and I doubt not these pastors often went forth to minister more faithfully and effectually to the heirs of salvation. It was in the freedom of these fireside conversations that the graces of your pastor's character shone forth, and you need not be told that children, instead of avoiding and fearing his company because he was a minister, soon learned to love him for his genial and happy disposition, his honest piety, and his unbounded kindness of heart. In later years I have often heard Scotch Presbyterianism referred to with a sneer and sometimes with manifestations of hatred. It is spoken of as if it were the very embodiment of austerity and characterized as sour and long-faced. The impression is made that this type of piety is utterly inimical to all human happiness and admirably adapted to render all religion repulsive to children and the young. I do not know where these scoffers have acquired their knowledge of the type of religion they hate and denounce. I have always supposed that it was this particular type that prevailed in my own home and in the home of your pastor. If so, then I pronounce the sneers and accusations referred to utterly groundless. In these homes sin was denounced and impurity expelled. God was recognized at every meal, and worshipped morning and evening. Sabbath was kept as a day of rest and holiness, and religious topics were discussed with becoming seriousness; but innocent fun was no stranger, mirth was more than an occasional visitor, and "vinegar" was unknown,

except that which stood in the castor bottle, or that which would sometimes well up from a naturally depraved heart. We who have been raised in these two families are forever debarred from acquiescing in the charge that this type of piety prejudices children against religion, by the recollection that the happiest hours of our childhood were those spent in the company of these two men, and others of like faith whose great aim it has been to introduce into every family the Scotch Presbyterianism that prevailed in their own.

I may sum up these early recollections by saying that this venerable servant of God has been to me a living embodiment of the truth of Solomon's words, "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," and you will scarcely think I am overstating the case when I say that what he has been to me he has been to every member of this church for the fifty years just closed. He is a monument of God's grace whereon for half a century might be read the inscription, "the holy are the happy."

If these words of praise seem to pass the bounds of delicacy, let the occasion be my excuse, and let us all remember that the servant of God is what he is by the grace of God. The doctrine of grace precludes boasting; for the prudence in counsel, the wisdom in planning, the zeal in executing, the peace-loving disposition and the generous and benevolent heart, found in any minister of the gospel, are fruits of the Spirit, and grounds for thankfulness but not for pride. Not only are we to recognize God's hand in the character His servant has borne, but also in the preservation of the pastoral bond, first formed fifty years ago. God has preserved this people from the love of novelty or sensationalism, which causes many a church in our day to grow weary of an old pastor, and to run after the new preacher that pleases the ears of the crowd. He has kept them from that liberalism of thought, and that desire to be fashionable which undervalue sound doctrine and a consistent life, and overvalue the popular gifts and stylish ways which entertain but cannot edify, and gather the crowds but convert no souls. And he has on the other hand not permitted his servant to

forget his true relation to the great head of the Church. Many of our pastorates are short, because the servant tries to improve on the place the Master has assigned to him by seeking another. He is as diligently engaged in promoting his own as his Master's interests. He waits not until his Master calls to him in unmistakable tones, to change his place but too often heeds the call of the world, or the flesh, or, I fear I must add, in some cases of the devil; for nothing pleases his satanic malice so much as to get a minister out of his place. Ministers are human; and whilst it may seem a reasonable rule, and an easy one to obey, that we are to stay where the Lord puts us until the Lord as undoubtedly orders us to another part of the field; yet without God's grace we may act contrary to it. The prospects of worldly advancement may seem to us a prospect of enlarged usefulness; the want of success in one field may be regarded as proof that we will be more successful in another field. Some dissatisfaction in our church which we ought to remove, or live down by patient Christ-like forbearance, we are prone to regard as proof that our work is done there. It is by such deceptive reasonings that many of Christ's servants are made restless, and seek vacant churches, in such numbers as to create the false impression that we have too many ministers. I fear we have too many who forget that they are servants of Christ, with no warrant for moving without a command from Him. If pastors and people everywhere did but as fully realize that the preacher is first of all a servant, as in the good grace of God you have done, long pastorates would become more common and many an evil disappear from our churches.

I will leave it to others to tell the results of these fifty years labor. But the good that can be described, is not a tithe of that which may be made known in the day of judgment. The souls converted and sanctified, the good impression left on the casual hearers, the comfort given the troubled, the encouragement of the weak—these are the minister's rewards, and this may be the happiest day in the life of our venerated friend because of its testimony to the good he has been en-

abled to accomplish. It is a grand comfort in the end of a life to know that we have not lived in vain. In a little while his Master shall say, "come up higher," and then shall he receive the reward of his life. He cannot enter Heaven a stranger, for a multitude is waiting to welcome him. That Saviour, whose precious promise, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," has been even thousands of times fulfilled in his long ministry, will welcome his appearance; and I am sure if His plaudit of "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord," could be heard on earth, a multitude of us who remain, and who have been profited by his life and ministry, would raise the shout of "Amen."

One of the elders then read the following—

HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE CHURCH.

Nearly one hundred years ago, that apostle of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania, Dr. John McMillan, crossed the Ohio, and organized at least, two Churches—Short Creek, (now Mt. Pleasant), and Richland (now St. Clairsville); which is the elder, we cannot now definitely decide. Both depend on tradition; and that says, 1798. The spot on which Short Creek was organized is still pointed out; the farm then belonged to Mr. John Mitchell,—now to Mr. Robert Finney, near where Beech Spring School House now stands. Under the spreading branches of a tree, and the broader expanse of an open Heaven, the Mt. Pleasant Church came into being. May she ever carry out her emblematic surroundings! Free as the air that stirred the leaves that day; sheltering all that came within her fold; aims and purpose reaching heavenward and still out of sight, believing there remains yet much to do for the Master! Being ever free in that liberty wherewith "Christ maketh His people free." The religious instinct of man that desires to be near the house of God in death, was manifested here; though only a tent (a covered stand for the Minister and leader of the singing), God's house and God's acre, as the Germans say. Two persons at least were buried there. The ruthless plough-

share has been driven again and again over them, their names all forgotten; but their bodies rest in the graves till the resurrection.

We do not know the names of persons asking for the organization. The first Elders were: Richard McKibbon, Thomas McCune, James Clark, and James Eagleson.

There was also a tent on the Maxwell place, about four miles east of Mt. Pleasant—now owned by Mr. Smith Hathorn. The first house of worship, a rude log one, without fireplace or stove, was built at the foot of what is now known as Hoge's Hill, near the rippling waters of little Short Creek. Tradition says, Henry West, Hugh McConahey, and William Pickens, built the pulpit, which was afterwards taken to the house on the hill. Worshipped there about twenty years—nothing to mark the spot now, but a few half-hidden tombstones that mutely appeal for remembrance from over a hundred buried dead.

For the next eleven years it occupied the Associate Reformed Church—known as the Union House, about two miles east of Mt. Pleasant, within the present enclosed graveyard, near Mr. Murray's. Beginning to have luxuries now,—a stove. In this spot sleep some of the Fathers and Mothers in Israel. One of the first Elders, Thomas McCune, (old Colonel McCune), as the oldest inhabitants called him. This house was finally made into threshing machines by Thomas Mitchell, Robert Theaker, and James H. Drennen. The pastor during these thirty-one years, was Rev. Joseph Anderson.

Times change and we change with them. While the "Union" house was occupied, Rev. Obadiah Jennings, from Steubenville, preached a missionary sermon on the Monday of a communion; and one good old lady (now in glory), thought it a desecration of the time and place, to be asking money to build the walls of Zion in other places. Economy was ranked among the virtues then, as I doubt not, some of these old Mothers in Israel carried their shoes and stockings to within a short distance of the church before putting them on.

In 1829 the foundation of the first house in Mt. Pleasant was laid; and the house completed in the winter of 1829 or 1830—nothing

known about the dedication, or whether it was dedicated. The building committee consisted of Adam Dunlap, John Hogg, and William Pickens. The brick work was done by Samuel Miller; Henry Amrine the wood work. Dr. Hamilton raised money among the Masons, to build the pulpit. Do you remember the high old structure, half way to the ceiling, that stood in the back part of the house, and the precentor's place in front with Mr. Archibald Major, Amos Jones, or William McGee, leading the singing? The pulpit flanked on one side by Squire Mitchell, and on the other by Adam Dunlap. Back by the door sat Mrs. Margaret Pickens on a chair, with a sharp eye for the drowsy ones, remarking to a good old Elder, inclined to nod, "Sleeping again, Henry!" We have no beadle now and the Elders nod on.

This house stood for twenty-five or twenty-six years. The walls becoming cracked and somewhat dangerous, it was determined to build a new one—the present edifice. This house was completed in August, 1855. Building committee: William Reid, Joseph Kithcart, and William McGee. Contractor for the wood work, J. H. Sidebottom; mason work, Charles Mercer and John Smith. A. G. Kinsey burned the brick; cost $2,115.80. Rev. Samuel Boyd, of Bridgeport, preached the dedicatory sermon, from the text, "And the house that is to be builded for the Lord, must be exceedingly magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." (1 Chron. 22: 5.)

The house was frescoed and repaired in 1870, at a cost of $800,—papered by the ladies of the congregation; pulpit remodeled, and carpeted in 1877, at a cost of $190.

Weekly prayer meetings (Thursday evenings) established sometime previous to 1850.

Sabbath School organized November 10th, 1868, by Dr. A. J. Alexander. Number of scholars first reported to the Presbytery, 60. Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, organized June 15th, 1878. The first President was Mrs. Sallie E. K. Williams; first Secretary, Miss Lafie C. Reid; first Treasurer, Miss Mary Kithcart. Organ

introduced in 1867. First marriage in the church—Mr. D. B. Updegraff and Miss E. J. C. Mitchell.

We have thus spoken as minutely as we could about the different local habitations of the Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church. An important part of the history of every church is the meeting place between them and their God. Dear as the ties of home are, and the associations of youthful days, the birth-place of the soul is dearer. We find it true that if the sense of hearing is lost, that of speech is sure to follow. So without church and ordinance, religion is sure to decline.

The congregation was in its earlier years drawn from the river on the east, and across what is now known as the Bridgeport Pike on the South. Adena on the west, and from nearly Smithfield on the north, including the names of Baldrige, McKibbon, McCune, Mitchell, Patterson, Williamson; Pastors, Lisby, Smith, Hone, Major, Eagleson, Amrine, Blackford, Lattimore, and many others whose names would fall strangely on our ears now. A sessional record—

Resolved, That it be affectionately enjoined on all the members of this church to observe the fast-days preparatory to communion seasons, themselves and families, by a suspension of secular employment; and in compliance with the intention of the church in appointing those days, devote the time in suitable preparation for occasions so awfully solemn—adopted unanimously April 22d, 1848. (Where are the fast-days now?)

Again 1831, Mr.—— comes before the Session, and states that he had been incautiously overtaken in the crime of drunkenness, in the town of Mt. Pleasant, and was guilty of some irregular conduct while in that condition. After some conversation, Session being satisfied as to his penitence, restored him to his former standing. "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin, shall find mercy."

Later, O. M. Bracken, is recognized as choir leader, and is held responsible for this part of the worship, as well as the conduct of the choir.

There have been twenty-four ruling Elders from the organization, up to the present time:

1798—Richard McKibbon, Thomas McCune, James Eagleson, and James Clark.

1808—Thomas Major and Adam Dunlap.

1829—John Alexander and Jacob Zull.

1832—David Baldrige, John Theaker, and John Major.

1839—Joseph Blackford, Joseph McCune, and Archibald Major.

1844—Henry Amrine, George M. Theaker, and Samuel McConahey.

1869—John A. Major and T. M. McConahey.

1873—C. O. Harbout, Jas. G. Theaker, R. S. Kithcart, and J. P. Bracken.

The last four, in connection with G. M. Theaker,* Samuel McConahey,† and T. M. McConahey, form the present Session. John Major died April 19th, 1868, having been a member of the Session for thirty-nine years. There are two members now that have served thirty-five years.

We would call to remembrance the silent majority; many lie in the quiet retreats of country church yards; and some in splendid suburban cemeteries; some found a grave beneath the swift-rushing waters of our Western rivers, and some sleep near where the troubled Atlantic breaks upon the shore. On western plain or eastern city, they have fallen asleep in Jesus. Some shall shine as stars forever, and ever, having turned many to righteousness; and some we fear will awake to shame and everlasting contempt. It is even easier to find the dead than the living. For "Gone are the living, but the dead remain, and not neglected; for a hand unseen scattering its bounty like a summer rain, still keeps their graves and their remembrance green." Briars and thorns, neglected graves, broken tablets, and leaning monumental shafts, are silent evidences that the dead are forgotten.

'Tis pleasant to meet to-day and celebrate a jubilee of years in the gospel ministry. A rare spectacle, indeed. A whole congregation of

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*Died Sept. 29th, 1880. †Died June 6th, 1883.

old men and maidens, young men and children, doing honor to the pastor, who has been their spiritual guide from their earliest years. He has married the parents, baptized the children, counseled them in all their troubles, ministered at the bedside of the sick and dying, and accompanied the bereaved, with words of comfort, to the graves of their loved ones. A blessed jubilee will shortly be when in the morning of the resurrection he shall say, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me." He will stand that day in the midst of a greater congregation than he has stood before here, and God shall place upon his head the crown, all glittering with jewels, which he has won by his faithful service, and he shall reign forever with the Divine Redeemer in glory and joy inexpressible and inconceivable. Breast-plate and ephod pressing on his heart no longer, and all too soon for those that love him, passing from the shepherd's toil to the shepherd's slumber.

The Lord has not forgotten this congregation, nor withheld His Spirit from us. The largest accessions have been as follows: May 23d, 1839, 19; May 26th, 1860, 16; February, 1864, 30; February, 1873, 17; February, 1878, 33.

Mt. Pleasant has sent forth colonies to Scotch Ridge and Farmington, also a large number to the neighboring churches of Martin's Ferry, Adena, Wheeling, Pleasant Valley, Smithfield, and Portland.

Some thirty years ago a class of six boys recited Latin and Greek to Dr. Mitchell. That class consisted of Alexander and James G. Theaker, James K. Large, Harvey Amrine, G. W. and Addison Mitchell. Just half of that class is living. One sleeps at San Antonia, Texas, two entered the ministry. James K. Large died soon after finishing his theological course. Harvey Amrine without charge. James G. Theaker is a ruling Elder, and G. W. Mitchell a granger.

We would not close these less than half told tales, without acknowledging the goodness of God in keeping us, as a church, through changing congregations and changing ministers. The truth, that Christ died for sinners, is as fresh to-day as when first proclaimed in Eastern Ohio in rude log cabins or shady wood. The same Great High Priest,

touched with a feeling of our infirmities, intercedes for us. The same Spirit is willing to lead us into all truth. Will we not, in humble dependence upon the Divine guidance, do that duty that lies nearest our home and heart, and thus become co-workers with God.

One in our faith, and one our longing,
To make the world within our reach
Somewhat the better for our living,
And gladder for our human speech.

A biographical sketch of Dr. Mitchell was read at this time.

Rev. Robert Alexander, of St. Clairsville, then addressed the audience. Brief remarks were made by Revs. Crawford, Parks, Chalfant, and Alexander. After singing a piece, specially written for the occasion, which we are compelled to omit for want of room, Mr. Pringle stated that several letters from ministers and others, former members of the congregation, had been received, and proceeded to read a few extracts, the lateness of the hour precluding more. The audience was dismissed with the benediction; and the reunion, long to be remembered by the citizens of Mt. Pleasant and their numerous guests, was ended.

One somewhat remarkable gathering, later on in life, was on his birthday in 1880. A number of his friends had been invited to spend the day with him. There were sixteen persons present over fifty years of age, and the average age was seventy-five.

Do you remember reader, those communion occasions over which Dr. Mitchell presided? After distributing the elements he would say, "I will not add words. 'Come, expressive silence, muse awhile.'" It has been remarked by persons that paid but little regard to religious things, that such occasions were the most impressive scenes that they ever witnessed. The last time our old Pastor assisted at communion service was on the 23d of Sept., 1883. His remarks were very impressive and much felt by all. He said he felt this was his farewell address to this people, and said "Farewell" in such a tone and manner

as could only be done by him. He closed with exhorting us to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.

Dr. Mitchell "was a decided churchman of the strongest Presbyterian form, one who loved his church to the last fibre of his being,—gloried in her history, strove to hold her where the Master had placed her—in the very van of his hosts—and magnified all in her and of her, yet lived so true and gentle and gracious a brother in the common family of a common Father, that, as devout men bore him to his burial, every branch of the church was represented in the throng."

"Would I describe a preacher such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,
Paul should himself direct me. * * *
* * * * I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain;
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture. Much impressed
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge;
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too. Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty man."

DEATH OF DR. BENJAMIN MITCHELL.

Died at his residence in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, December 26th, 1884, Rev. Benjamin Mitchell, D. D., aged 84 years. His health and strength had continued fairly good for one at his age, until within four days of his death, when he suddenly failed, and hemorrhage of the stomach ensued. It soon became evident that he had entered upon the final conflict, and for a few hours his suffering and distress from nausea were very great. There was no time however, when the name of Jesus and his promises were not as a healing balm; and under the inspiration of songs and praise, he was soothed, and when the children and grand-children around his bed sang the 23d Psalm he joined most heartily with his usual sweetness of voice. Also in "Gates Ajar,"

"Jesus lover of my soul," etc., always emphasizing the personal pronouns—"I," "me," "my." The 14th chapter of John seemed very precious, as he dwelt upon the "peace" which Jesus gives, and the "place" which He has gone to prepare, and His promise to "Come again and receive us unto Himself." Once and again, just before his last sleep—exclaiming, "come Lord Jesus, come quickly,"—adding emphatically, "He's coming, He's coming." His joining in prayer, his leave taking and the repeated "farewell, farewell all," were always accompanied with a tenderness and affection peculiar to himself. When urged to sleep, he answered, "yes, yes, will go to sleep," and with childish simplicity repeated that little prayer, which he has never failed to utter all these years since childhood:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take,
And this I ask for Jesus' sake."

His last words were uttered—his last work was done, the conflict was over, and, assisted by a gentle anodyne, he fell into a peaceful slumber, from which he awoke a time or two, but only to sleep again. This was continued for some forty-eight hours, when he quietly fell asleep in Jesus.

FUNERAL SERVICES.

The burial took place on Monday, the 29th instant. At 11 o'clock a mournful procession was formed at the late residence of the deceased. It was headed by the Elders of Mt. Pleasant Church, the Elders of Martin's Ferry, Rockhill, etc., following. Then the various ministers who were present; then the pall bearers, with their precious burden, followed by the family, relatives and friends—a numerous company. The commodious church was crowded by a sympathetic throng and in the lecture room as well as about the doors, all available space was occupied by many that stood throughout the entire service. The pall

bearers were Messrs. Oliver Bracken, William Williams, Smiley Kithcart, David Buchanan, John Harbourt, Robert Chambers, Oliver Flanner, William Bowles, William Harrison, and John Ong.

The church—successor of the one in which that magnificent voice so melodious and sonorous, first led in worship the fathers, the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers and mothers of the congregation of to-day—was heavily and handsomely draped in mourning. The large easy chair which had been provided by a loving people for his greater comfort, when the pulpit was given into the stronger hands of a younger man, sat empty in its accustomed place covered with crape. On the table by the coffin, resting on a somber background of black, was a large and exquisite pillow of flowers—tea roses, camellias, etc., surrounded by smilax, and in the centre, (a thought of kindly comfort for the sorrowing ones) the words "At Rest." On the quiet pulseless breast lay a cluster of wheat heads, ripe, ready for the reaper, telling with their silent voices as eloquent a story of finished work as could fall from the lips of the most gifted orator. The casket was covered with black cloth and was plain and very handsome. On its silver plate was inscribed one single word that caused a chord in every heart in that great crowd to tremble with a tender sympathetic thrill, the simple loving word, "Father."

When all was hushed and still the silence was broken by the low sweet melody of the organ and the singing of the hymn, "Shall we meet beyond the river," followed by prayer by Rev. J. H. Gray, of the Methodist Church; then the Scripture reading by Rev. E. F. Walker, of the Presbyterian Church of Martin's Ferry; followed by singing the 23d Psalm. A most feeling and practical address was then delivered by Rev. Robert Alexander, D. D., of St. Clairsville, who was in charge of the services, owing to the regretted absence and illness of the Pastor, Rev. S. W. Pringle. Dr. Alexander alluded to the difficulty of his task, of giving suitable expression to the thoughts and feelings that pressed for utterance. His must be a tribute of love and veneration for his spiritual father. These hands now cold in

death had sprinkled the water of Baptism upon his brow, when in infancy his parents had consecrated him to God. It was under his ministry that he had yielded his heart to Christ. By him he had been received into the church and taken the vows of God upon him. And later, when licensed to preach the gospel these lips now so silent, had spoken the word that gave him authority to do so. His earliest impression of what a minister of the gospel should be, were received from this man of God. As children we were delighted at his coming to our house; his loving heart drew us all to him; we never knew what it was to be afraid of the preacher; we longed to be such a man as he was and do such a work as he was doing. Our mother taught us to think of him as the very best—as he was. Who can estimate the influence of his life? Fifty-five years ago he settled here in eastern Ohio, and for more than a quarter of a century he went as a Bishop everywhere over this wide field preaching the gospel, and so well was the work done that we now find in that same territory ten congregations of Presbyterians. For nearly fifty years he continued as the Pastor of this church, honored and beloved. He has baptized the children, married the youth, visited the sick, buried the dead, comforted the bereaved, and been a spiritual counselor for all—all of this work is imperishable. No monument of brass or marble will so well perpetuate his memory as his noble work of half a century. And since it has been relinquished on account of the infirmities of age, it has been beautiful to see the cordial and happy relations which have continued to exist between him and the people, as well as between him and his successor—the present honored pastor, whose absence to-day we so much regret. Nothing but love and kindness and consideration for one another was ever heard of in this most delicate and difficult of positions. But he has gone to his reward of "well done," and it certainly cannot be otherwise than that his influence for good shall be felt on generations yet to come.

Rev. Milford, of New Athens, O., followed with brief and appropriate remarks. His acquaintance with Dr. Mitchell has not been so

long or so intimate as many, but some striking and admirable traits in his character he greatly appreciated. He was not one of those ministers that spring into sight like the brilliant and fiery comet with its unknown origin attracting great attention for a season and then vanishing into the darkness of space—going as it came. Instead of this his light shone steadily on like a star which God has fixed unmovably in the heavens, and its strong and steady light is the same from one generation to another, and by it the tempest-tossed mariner may safely make his reckoning. Rev. John B. Graham, of New Lisbon, Ohio, was the next speaker. He was here rather as a mourner than a speaker. For fifty-two years he has known Father Mitchell, and upon hearing of his death he felt no sacrifice too great in order to be present at his funeral. He remembered the loving disposition and the generous-heartedness of Dr. Mitchell—the nobility as well as the sturdiness of his nature. He was a wise counselor, and largely confided in by his brethren in the ministry. His judgment was good and he had intense love for the right. He was a peace man and a peace-maker. If difficulties arose in Presbytery, as they sometimes do, Dr. Mitchell was always the man to pour oil on the troubled waters. Neither was his religion of a narrow and sectarian type. He loved all who bore the name and image of Jesus. Like his Master he could say, "whoso doeth the will of my Father, the same is my mother and sister and brother." That his great heart of love embraced all of God's dear children is evidence here to-day. This multitude are not all Presbyterians. All denominations are here present to testify their esteem and affection for our brother. Rev. Walker, of Martin's Ferry, said that while he could not say much of Dr. Mitchell, he would say a word for him. He was sure that if those lips could open once more, in the hearing of this vast company, they would say: "by the grace of God, I am what I am." This is the secret of it all. Natural gifts and characteristics, however marked, could not explain the scenes and testimonies of this day. It is to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ experimentally known and faithfully preached that we are indebted

for what he is to us to-day, and for what his memory and example may be to us in the future. He had been in this Presbytery but a little time, but long enough to find that when Dr. Mitchell was mentioned amongst the brethren it was as "precious ointment poured forth." Rev. J. H. Gray, of the Methodist church, Rev. Milton Pettit and sister Caroline Talbott, of the Friends' church, and others, followed in touching tributes of affectionate regard. They would gladly join in testifying the esteem and veneration felt for a dear departed friend. Pointed help was given, spiritual help received, and Christian fellowship enjoyed. Then came the closing prayer by Rev. Graham—full of tenderness and love and faith; this was followed by the hymn, "I would not live always," when an opportunity was given to take a last look at the familiar face, so natural, yet so still in death. There was no haste—no confusion—all present seemed to participate in the tearful solemnity of the occasion.

And as we saw the long procession that came reverently with bowed heads, to look through blinding tears upon that well-known and well-beloved face, that for the first time failed to brighten at their coming, we felt that sorrow had indeed touched every one. But while we stood a great crowd of mourners, "among those low, green tents whose curtains ne'er swing out" on the sunny hillside in Highland Cemetery, that balmy spring-like morning in midwinter, and saw all that was mortal borne to its final resting place, who was there among us that did not wish that when the hour came for us to quit work, and close our tired eyes in that long dreamless sleep, we too, might with the same child-like faith and simplicity, fold our hands and say as he did:

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
> If I should die before I wake;
> I pray the Lord my soul to take,"

And leave behind a memory just as sweet?

From letters written by brethren who could not be present, a few extracts are taken:

Rev. James I. Brownson, D. D., of Washington, Pa., says: "I have known Dr. Mitchell, intimately, for about thirty-five years, and have always regarded him with the utmost respect, both as a Christian man and a minister of Christ. In wisdom, conscientiousness and true devotion, I would not know where to look for his superior. The precious legacy of 'good name' comes down to his descendants as an inheritance never to be forfeited. He, himself, wears an incorruptible crown. * * * Though nature must weep over the earthly loss of a father so wise, so good, so loving, faith must follow him with triumphal song up to the presence and glory of the Redeemer, whom he loved and served with such singleness of heart, and such untiring devotion. Why lament when he wears a conqueror's crown, and sees Jesus as He is? Let us all rather be thankful, that after a ripe experience of gracious life, and a long, honorable and useful service, as a herald of the gospel message, he has heard and answered the call, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter into the joy of thy Lord.'"

Rev. Dr. Reid, of Steubenville, says: "But, having passed his four-score, and being a ripe shock for the garner of the Lord, there is in one view, little room for tears, for we know that for him to depart and be with Christ, was far better. He was a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; kind, gentle, thoughtful, affectionate, devout; a wise counsellor, a good preacher and pastor, a true friend, an earnest patriot. God sends few such to this world."

The following minutes were adopted, relative to the death of Dr. Mitchell, by the St. Clairsville Presbytery at its late meeting:

"It becomes the sad duty of Presbytery to record the death of Rev. Benjamin Mitchell, D. D., the senior minister of this Presbytery, who, through the whole of his ministerial life (fifty-five years) was

identified with the Church of Mt. Pleasant, and for twenty-three years of that time, with the Church of Rock Hill, as their Pastor. His death occurred on December 26th, A. D., 1884, in his 85th year, and in the full triumph of the Christian faith. So long was his life; so faithful his ministry; so deep his interest in education and all public affairs; so great his love for God and men; so pure his life; so kind and gentle all his ways, that we here record our highest respect and reverence for his memory; our admiration for him as a model friend, companion and Christian minister; our gratitude to God for the gift of His servant to the church; our humble desire to follow him as he followed Christ, and our deep sympathy with his friends and relatives who mourn the loss of so good and noble a father, who has passed from earth's cares and labors into his everlasting rest."

SERMON

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE REV. BENJAMIN MITCHELL, D.D., OF MT. PLEASANT, O., PREACHED BY REV. ROBERT ALEXANDER, D.D., BEFORE THE PRESBYTERY OF ST. CLAIRSVILLE, AT MARTIN'S FERRY, O., APRIL 28, 1885.

TEXT,—Psalm 112: 6. "The righteousness shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Since the last meeting of this Presbytery, the oldest member of it, a venerable and beloved father, has ceased from all earthly cares and labors, and entered into his everlasting rest. It is thought proper to begin our meeting at this time with a memorial discourse on the life and character of that good and faithful minister of Christ. This seems especially appropriate in this place (Martin's Ferry), as this was a part of the field of labor in which he wrought more than fifty years ago. To the Presbytery I am sure it will be agreeable, and to those of us who knew him well, the name of the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Mitchell will be precious while mind and memory last; and to those who did not know him personally, in the days of strength and vigor, the review of this life ought to be encouraging and inspiring; and

there is much in this character worthy of the imitation of any minister or of any man. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." The Master, whom he served, would, we are certain, have that life and ministry remembered in the church below for their profit, and for the glory of the grace that made him what he was. Let us briefly review that excellent life, and long and faithful ministry which has lately closed.

Let us consider particularly those traits of character and accomplishments, which distinguished Dr. Mitchell as a friend, a minister and a pastor:

1. He was an accurate scholar. His advantages were limited. Distant from any great school or college, and with no means to bear the expense of an education, he worked his own way and availed himself of such opportunities as were within his reach, especially a classical school taught by Rev. Dr. Samuel Martin of his native county, under whom also he studied theology. He had indeed rare advantages in being under such a profound theologian as Dr. Martin, of whom Dr. Charles Hodge said, he always wondered that so eminent a man had never been called to some college or theological seminary, but these advantages possessed by Dr. Mitchell were little, compared with those now within the reach of any young man. Yet he laid a most excellent foundation. Without any pretence to great scholarship he was remarkable for accuracy. What he knew, he knew thoroughly. Few slips or blunders were ever heard from him in speaking. As a critic in Presbytery he was not surpassed by any one. All these things indicate what he might have attained to, with great advantages in early life.

2. He was sound in the faith. With the most modest views of his own ability as a preacher, and having no ambition to be eminent in his calling, he ever preached the Gospel of Christ with great clearness and in the strictest orthodoxy. In the long years of his ministry and in the thousands of sermons that fell from his lips, no sentiment was perhaps ever uttered by him at variance with the true faith. He

believed the Bible and preached it with the evident conviction of one who is fully persuaded, that what he declared was the revelation of the living God, which men must believe in order to be saved. He believed in Jesus with abiding faith, with ardent piety, and no one who sat under his ministry could doubt it.

3. He had great heart-power as a preacher of the gospel. With a clear and accurate presentation of gospel truth, few public speakers ever had a more magnificent voice than his, so powerful, so musical, so expressive. He was always heard with pleasure. But his strength was not in the head, in saying great and profound things, to which he made no pretensions, nor in the voice to speak them grandly; but in the heart that was behind all, and gave power to all he said and did. That great heart of his spoke out in words and manner, and emotions and tears, and would be heard. It is not every man who can weep in the pulpit with a good effect. Perhaps Paul could. Whitefield certainly could, and some can; but not every one. Dr. Mitchell could do this to perfection. His tender words corresponded with his glowing countenance and flowing tears. The scene stands out distinctly before me through the long vista of thirty-five or forty years when at the close of an earnest sermon, he exclaimed: "How shall it be with us when the Church of Rock Hill, and their unworthy Pastor, shall stand at the bar of God." This he said while the tears flowed down his cheeks. Would not such a scene impress the mind of a child, as I then was? Was it not enough to move any heart? Here was his strength at all times, a power to speak from the heart, so that all felt it was from his sincere heart, and the truth thus uttered rarely fails to reach the hearts of others. The eloquence of the heart is the greatest the world has ever known. Blessed are they who have it.

4. He was everywhere consistent with his high calling as an ambassador for Christ. Many here can look back on the past and think of him as their ideal of a Christian minister. Not that there was reserve or lofty dignity, as if he were little interested in the affairs

of men, and as if no one could smile in his presence; he was no such a caricature of the minister as that. He was a delightful companion, a welcome guest in any home, a centre of attraction to old and young everywhere. But he nowhere laid aside his ministerial character. His cheerful disposition, singing, laughter and pleasant jokes were never inconsistent with his calling. No one could forget that he was a minister devoted to his work as a servant of Christ. No inconsistency attaches to his memory. Can any one think of him as parsimonious, mean, envious, uncharitable, close in business dealings, disagreeable as a neighbor, foolish, thoughtless, ill-tempered, one or more of these faults found in many an excellent minister? Did one of these common faults belong to him? Surely it would be hard to find a more fully rounded character in which there were so few things to detract from his usefulness. When he preached his words came with the force of a noble character behind them, that gave them strength and power. He could have well said to his hearers any time, "Follow me as I do follow Christ," and they would have felt the power of his example.

5. He was chiefly distinguished for a kind and loving disposition. This made him tender in his preaching, forbearing toward others, ready to help the weak, restore the erring and make one happy. For this above everything else he was distinguished. On the floor of Presbytery he was known as the man of peace. If he was ever willing to fight for anything it was for peace. At one time many years ago, when a subject of great excitement was under discussion, and sharp words were uttered, he sat in deep mortification and only said "Shame, shame, brethren." In a famous trial before Presbytery, at a later date, he was pleading for peace and compromise; one brother said in reply to him, "He says peace, peace when there is no peace." Dr. Mitchell's only answer to this was "Blessed are the peace-makers." When difficulties were to be settled in congregations, among the people or between pastor and people, who should the Presbytery send but Dr. Mitchell, the peace-maker and wise counsellor, as chairman of the committee of visitation.

While so kind, and generous, and thoughtful of the feelings of others, he could not be imposed upon with impunity. Once in Rock Hill, the congregation was inattentive while he was preaching; he paused and said: "I will take my seat till I can have the attention of the congregation;" and down he sat. They never forgot that lesson. Perhaps Mt. Pleasant may also remember some such rebukes, if ever they were deserved. Some years ago, in Presbytery, a brother had been called to account for some inconsistency, and Dr. Mitchell anxious to view his case in the best light said, "Has not the brother been at least a little imprudent?" But his kind offices were not well received and Mr. Mitchell said, "The brother does not know my heart, and all I have to say is, he has not done his case any good by his speech." With all his desire to save the feelings of others, whenever he found it necessary to speak out, what he said was understood and felt.

Such a great and generous spirit as his was known of others. Through the long pastorate in one place he retained the respect and confidence of every one, not only of Presbyterians but of persons of all denominations. With all the prejudice the Friends have against what they call "a hireling ministry," such was the manner of this good man, such his devotion to Christ, and his wisdom in his intercourse with all around, that he disarmed their prejudices, gained their good will and convinced every one of them that he was a man, called of God to preach the gospel. A member of this Presbytery when visiting him years ago was deeply impressed by the evidence of great respect shown by all as they passed along the streets of Mt. Pleasant. At last Dr. Mitchell said, "There comes a man who is too conscientious to pay a hireling minister anything, but always manages to bring my tax receipts home with him when he goes to pay his taxes, and presents them to me." At his funeral, tender words of testimony to the value of his long, consistent and useful life, were uttered by those among whom he had lived so long, and the grave closed over him amid the general lamentation of all who knew him. His death was

a beautiful closing of a calm, uniform and beautiful life. Having walked closely with his God and Saviour, he passed into the valley of death in the full triumph of faith.

"Life's race well run,
Life's work all done,
Life's victory won
Now comes the rest."

He rests from his labor and his works do follow him.

Brethren, let us consecrate ourselves anew to our work. Whatever there was in that good and noble life of our venerable, and beloved father that will add to our usefulness and efficiency, let us imitate. Let us praise God that He gave him to the church, and put His Spirit upon him, and gave him so long a life and such a noble ministry.

Let us all, as ministers and people, feel as we never have before the value of a sterling Christian character, a source of power while we live, and the most precious legacy we can leave behind us when we die.

(*From the "Ohio Valley News."*)

After a long confinement to the house, during which Rev. Benjamin Mitchell took his departure to the spirit land, passing once more the beautiful Lynn grove in front of his former residence, my eyes turned involuntarily to the shade where my esteemed and venerable friend usually sat, when the weather was fair, with book or paper in hand, and the vacant spot reflected the sad thought, that I could no more exchange with him the pleasant greetings, so frequently and so cordially reciprocated in bygone years. On one occasion I stepped up to him and said, "Dr. Mitchell, what are you reading?" He raised the paper quickly to look at the heading, but I held it and said, "Oh, no, Dr. Mitchell, tell me without looking at the heading." His face lighted up with his usual benignant smile, and then laughing

heartily at the trick, he replied, "Why, Mr. H., I cannot remember one word of what I was reading; the moment I take my eyes off the paper, it all passes from my recollection." The manly form was there, the genial smile that spoke the goodness of his great heart was there, even that low keyed, musical and trumpet voice, which was only Dr. Mitchell's, and would have identified him among ten thousand, still survived the wreck of fourscore years and more; but that mysterious endowment, the intellectual faculty, which had shone upon and held in deep and solemn attention, thousands of listening and interested audiences, had burned out its force and brilliancy, to shine no more this side that curtain, that separates between the mortal and immortal states. More than a half century ago the writer was associated with Rev. Benjamin Mitchell, in organizing a Washingtonian Total Abstinence Society on the river hill, this side of Martin's Ferry, in a school-house. Perhaps only two signers of that pledge, beside the writer, now survive; these are Joshua Steele and Robert Blackford. This good work, so characteristic of Dr. Mitchell's life, in connection with the unqualified terms, in which he denounced a popular habit, and at that day, not uncommon even among church members, gave him a place in the esteem of the writer, which has been confirmed by a long acquaintance, and which to-day awakens memories most pleasing to cherish. A Calvinist of the Scotch Presbyterian school, and hence an adherent of the Westminster Confession, he was equally free from the impetuous temperaments of Augustine, the severity of John Calvin, and the narrowness of Cotton Mather. The ancestors of Benjamin Mitchell were cradled in the political and religious storms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was amidst these convulsions of dying kingcraft and dying priestcraft, that the teachings of Jesus and Paul were again re-affirmed, and that God took back to Himself His sovereignty over consciences and souls, and that civil and religious liberty were born into the world to live forever. A great spirit, like Dr. Mitchell's, could not be bounded by name or sects. The blood of the Knoxes coursing in his veins, and baptized

into the free spirit of his Master, an iron theology could set easy and gracefully upon his shoulders, without distorting his rare good sense, or impairing in the least his liberality and Christian charity, for honest minds who differed from him in religious belief.

Being moulded by the Spirit, after the type of his Master, the only true model, he formed his standard of true character on the plane of practical Christian manhood, not on the plane of Christian profession. As a preacher Mr. Mitchell was dignified and grave in manner, earnest, eloquent and impressive in style, while his commanding presence and matchless voice always enlisted the attention of his hearers. But perhaps no other trait of character in this excellent man gave him so much power over others, as his success as a peace-maker. That goodness of heart that inspires a disinterested devotion to the well being of others, does not only disarm opposition, but it transforms the Lion into a Lamb, and an enemy into a friend. The Saviour's benediction on such is, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." Multitudes of the living to-day unite in awarding heartfelt benedictions upon Rev. Benjamin Mitchell, while they and their children will cherish his memory and illustrate in their lives the salutary influence of his teaching and example. During his early manhood, both before and after he came to Mt. Pleasant, he labored with his own hands, and in accordance with the Divine decree ate his bread in the sweat of his face, and hence escaped the blighting curse of idleness, the irreconcilable enemy of virtue.

Mr. Mitchell's rural habits in early life brought him into more intimate sympathy with an agricultural and comparatively new settlement at Mt. Pleasant, where he labored so long and so acceptably, and hence enhanced his usefulness among them as a minister. In his departure the church universal, and Christianity in its widest sense, has sustained a loss, the poor and afflicted have lost a wise counselor and prompt and tender friend. His children have lost an affectionate father, and society has lost a model Christian citizen. Rev. Benjamin Mitchell has left an impression for good on Mt. Pleasant neighborhood

that will survive him for generations to come. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, yea saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

"I am glad that he has lived thus long,
And glad that he has gone to his reward!
Nor deem that kindly nature did him wrong
Softly to disengage the vital cord.
When his weak hand grew palsied and his eye
Dark with the mists of age, it was his time to die."—

HENRY HEBERLING, SR., Mt. Pleasant, O.

REV. SAMUEL W. PRINGLE.

"One has no merit in being born of Scottish, or, Scoto-Irish parents, however great the advantages may be. He has received a blessing, however, just as has the man born on American soil and in a true American atmosphere." The grandfathers (on both sides of the house) of Rev. Samuel Wilson Pringle, third pastor of the Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church, came of this sturdy stock. Reared in the Presbyterian and United Presbyterian community of New Concord, Muskingum County, Ohio, it is not to be wondered at that prayers of pious ancestors were answered. He graduated at Princeton, in 1873, and from the Western Theological Seminary, of Allegheny, Pa., in 1877. Before he finished his Seminary course he received a call from the church of Mt. Pleasant. The call was accepted, but not to go into effect till he had finished the course. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Zanesville, April 8th, 1877, and was dismissed from that Presbytery to connect himself with the Presbytery of St. Clairsville. Being received by that body he was ordained and installed by a committee from the Presbytery of St. Clairsville, at Mt. Pleasant, June 12th, 1877. Mr. Pringle used Rom. 8: 2, as text for his ordination sermon. Rev. R. Armstrong, of New Athens, gave the charge to the people, and Rev. D. Milner, of Ottawa, Kansas, to the pastor. Dr. Mitchell—still retained as "pastor emeritus"—was present to give the young pastor his warmest blessing. The pleasant relation thus begun

was only broken by the death of the Senior Pastor. While one took up the active duties the other followed with his prayers.

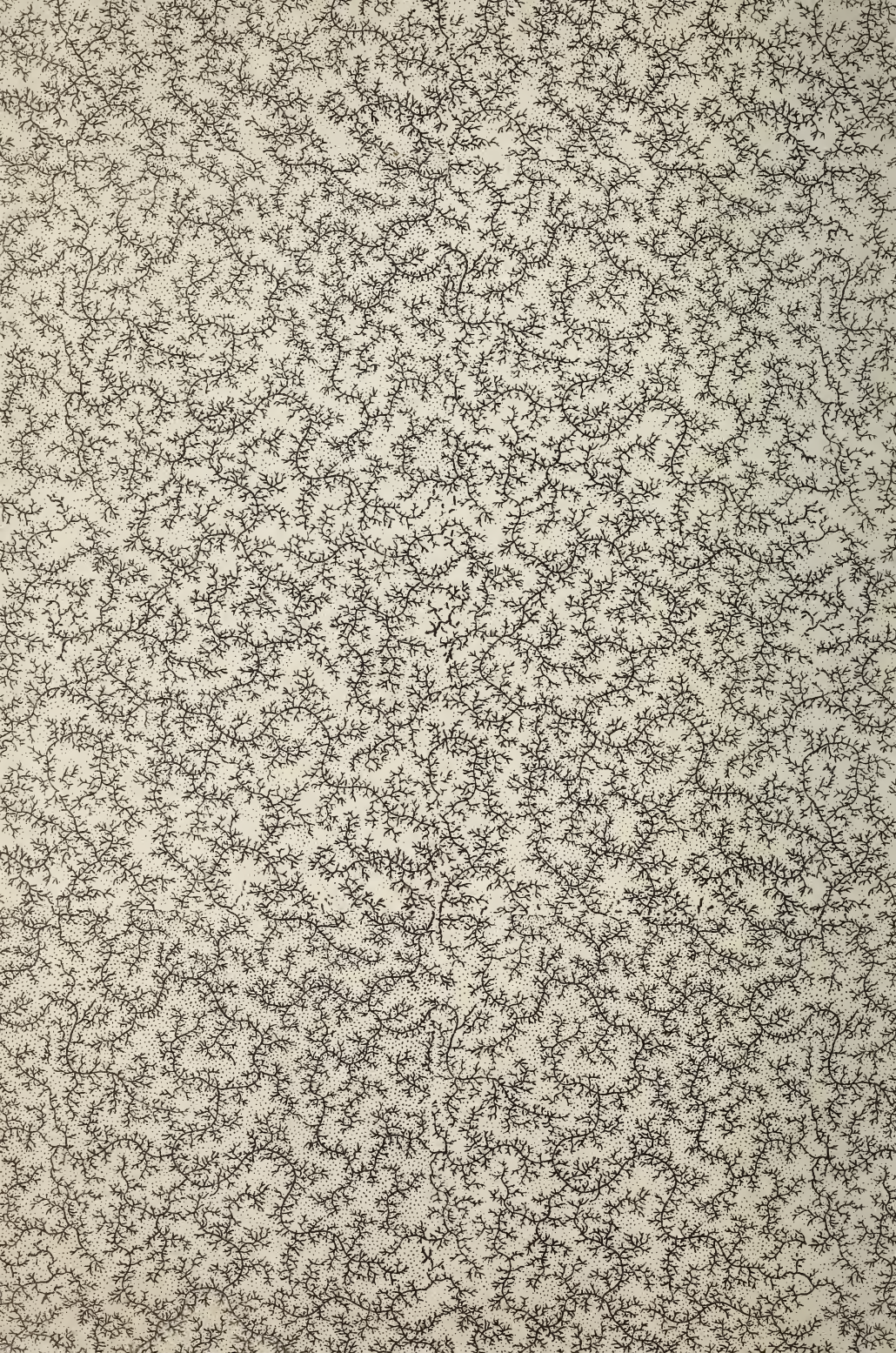
June 12th, 1887, being Children's Day and also the tenth anniversary of Rev. S. W. Pringle's pastorate, was made a dual pleasure. By request Mr. Pringle gave a review of his labor among us. The church was tastefully decorated. Back of the pulpit was a graceful festooning of evergreen, on one side of which was the date, 1877 (the year our pastor came to us) and on the other, 1887, in large evergreen figures. Just in front of the pulpit was a pyramid of pot flowers, while each pillar was graced with beautiful bouquets from which fell long graceful sprays of eglantine. A well chosen text was taken from Deut. 8: 2, "Remember all the way the Lord has led thee," and was in keeping with the feeling and sentiment of the day. The sermon throughout was a thanksgiving of praise to God for His goodness and mercy to him and his people.

We give some items of church work. Number received into the church in ten years, 205. Sabbath-school membership doubled. Amount contributed to the Boards and benevolent objects, $3,345.00. Congregational and miscellaneous, $12,225.00. Total, $15,570.00. Removed by death, 25. During this period a lecture room and a primary class room have been added to the rear of the church. A fine bell, the gift of Mrs. Isabel Alexander, calls the congregation to prayers. A new organ was given the church by persons who were once members of this church—but now of others, by removal—as a token of their love for their Christian "Alma Mater."

It was thought by many when Dr. Mitchell, who had served the people of Mt. Pleasant for half a century and was the oldest minister in the Presbytery, resigned in consequence of the weight of years, and the congregation chose the youngest man in the Presbytery—a mere boy almost—they had taken a good many risks, but the boy has grown to the full stature of a man and worthily supports the honor and dignity, the power and respect, so long upheld by Father Mitchell. Some changes are now being made by way of adding to the comfort and

beauty of the church. The stoves have been removed and a furnace has taken their place. A vestibule is to take the place of the old pulpit, and the sacred desk to be placed in the north end. Windows will be placed where the doors were—one of them, a Dr. Mitchell Memorial Window. The floor inclined from north to south and seats reversed. With added comfort we would not forget the Master of the house—nor His command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel."

"Still to a gracious Providence
The thanks of grateful hearts are due
For blessings when our lives were new;
For all the good vouchsafed us since.
* * * * * * *
For life and death with God are one:
Unchanged by seeming change His care
And love are round us here and there:
He breaks no thread His hands have spun."



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